

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Final Report: Michigan Child and Family Services Review**

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) assesses State performance during a specified time period on seven child welfare outcomes pertaining to safety, permanency, and well-being and with respect to seven systemic factors. The Michigan CFSR was conducted the week of September 9, 2002. The assessment is based on information from

the following sources:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Child and Family Services Administration of the Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA);
- The State Data Profile prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Reviews of 49 cases from three counties in the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three counties and the State capital) with a wide range of stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, various levels of State and local FIA personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

With respect to State performance on the child welfare outcomes, the State Data Profile indicated that for fiscal year 2000, Michigan met the national standards for the following measures:

- The rate of recurrence of substantiated child maltreatment within 6 months of a prior substantiated maltreatment.
- The incidence of maltreatment of children in foster care.
- The rate of foster care re-entries within 12 months of discharge from a previous foster care episode.
- The percentage of finalized adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child’s entry into foster care.

In addition, the CFSR case reviews and stakeholder interviews identified other strengths for the State:

- Providing services to families to prevent children’s removal from home.
- Preventing repeat maltreatment.
- Preventing re-entries into foster care.
- Establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner.
- Implementing diligent efforts to achieve the goal of adoption in a timely manner.
- Placing children in close proximity to their parents or close relatives.
- Preserving children’s connections to their neighborhoods and extended families and friends while in foster care.
- Meeting children’s needs for physical health services.

Despite these many strengths, the State Data Profile indicated that Michigan did not meet the national standards for the percentages of children reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care or for the percentages of children experiencing no more than two placements during the first 12 months in foster care. Also, the case reviews and stakeholder interviews resulted in the finding that the State did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

With respect to safety outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect), the key concern identified pertained to the issue of responding to reports of child maltreatment. Although the CFSR found that responses to maltreatment reports were begun in a timely manner, caseworkers were not consistent in establishing face-to-face contact with the child victim, the caretaker, or the perpetrator in accordance with agency policy. The primary concern noted for safety outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate) was that the agency was not consistent in its efforts to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Concerns also were identified for the two permanency outcomes. For permanency outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations), the case reviews found that in several cases, the agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goals of reunification or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner. For permanency outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) the identified concerns were the following:

- Children in foster care were not being placed with siblings on a consistent basis.
- The agency was not always diligent in promoting visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings who were also in foster care.
- The agency was not sufficiently diligent in some cases in their efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care.

In addition, the CFSR found that child well-being outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs), was substantially achieved in only 71.4 percent of the cases reviewed. The case reviews indicated that for many families, FIA was not effective in addressing the needs and services of children, parents, and/or foster parents (item 17). Other identified concerns were that children and families were not consistently involved in case planning (item 18), and caseworker visits with parents and children (items 19 and 20) often were not of sufficient frequency or quality to ensure children's safety and well-being or promote attainment of case goals.

CFSR findings also indicate that FIA is inconsistent in its efforts to address children's educational needs (child well-being outcome 2) and physical and mental health needs (child well-being outcome 3). However, with respect to child well-being outcome 3, the key concern identified pertained to addressing mental health needs rather than physical health needs. The key findings were that for some

children, there was a lack of adequate assessment of mental health needs and for some children, there was an identified need for mental health services that had not been met.

CFSR findings with respect to the State's performance on the systemic factors suggest that the State has most of the necessary systems in place to support the attainment of children's safety, permanency, and well-being. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with factors related to the statewide information system; quality assurance system; training; service array; agency responsiveness to the community; and foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

However, the State was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of the case review system. Concerns were identified regarding inconsistent involvement of parents in the case planning process even though FIA has a policy requiring joint case plan development. Concerns were also identified regarding the lack of consistency with which permanency hearings are conducted every 12 months. Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that some permanency hearings are not being held timely because of continuances and/or limited time on court dockets. The findings of the review also indicate an inconsistent notification of foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of any periodic review or permanency hearing held with respect to children due in part to a lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities and process for notifying these parties.

The following is a summary of the CFSR findings regarding specific outcomes and systemic factors.

## **KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES**

### **I. SAFETY**

***Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.***

#### **Status of Safety Outcome S1 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that 83.7 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as having substantially achieved this outcome, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

The CFSR findings with respect to Safety Outcome 1 indicate that, for the most part, FIA is effective in protecting children from abuse and neglect. Repeat maltreatment was observed in only 2 of the 49 cases reviewed, and Michigan's rate of repeat

maltreatment (3.3%), as reported in the State Data Profile, meets the national standard of 6.1 percent. In addition, Michigan's rate of maltreatment in foster care by foster parents or facility staff (.33%) also meets the national standard of .57 percent. The one concern identified during the CFSR pertained to the response to child maltreatment reports. The case reviews found that although FIA caseworkers did begin the investigation in a timely manner, they were not consistent in establishing face-to-face contact with child victims, caretakers, and/or perpetrators within the timeframes established by agency policy.

**Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although 75 percent of the applicable cases were rated as a Strength for this item, in 25 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers found that investigations were initiated in a timely manner, but workers did not routinely establish face-to-face contact with child victims, caretakers, or perpetrators in accordance with agency policy.

**Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the following findings.

- There was no maltreatment recurrence in 96 percent of the cases reviewed.
- The State Data Profile indicates that the incidence of repeat maltreatment in calendar year 2000 was 3.3 percent, which meets the national standard of 6.1 percent.

***Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.***

**Status of Safety Outcome S2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 83.6 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

A general CFSR finding was that FIA makes diligent efforts to maintain children safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. In the majority of in-home services cases reviewed, families were served by a private provider agency under contract to FIA. Case managers from these agencies have primary responsibility for the cases and routinely report to the FIA caseworker on progress. Reviewers determined that these case managers provided intensive direct home-based services to the families, linked the families to other needed services in the community, and monitored service provision and progress. In addition, in a few cases, services were provided to families after reunification to support the reintegration of the family and prevent another removal from the home. However, the CFSR also found that FIA was less effective in its efforts to reduce the risk of harm to children. For some of the

in-home services cases, reviewers noted that FIA did not provide services to address the families' underlying problems or did not respond appropriately when parents did not follow through with services.

### **Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 90 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that FIA made diligent efforts to provide services to prevent children's placement in foster care. The Statewide Assessment notes that, since 1988, Families First of Michigan has initiated over 40,000 family interventions involving more than 100,000 children at risk of removal. Of the families served, 84 percent were still together one year later.

### **Item 4. Risk of harm to child.**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although this item was rated as a Strength in 84 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that in 16 percent of the applicable cases FIA had not made sufficient efforts to reduce risk of harm to children. Both the case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that, in some instances, FIA is not adequately assessing risk of harm, particularly in situations in which relative placements are occurring without home studies and background checks. Stakeholders also noted that there are situations in which the family's past history with child welfare is not taken into account in the assessment of risk, often because the information has not been collected or is not available to the caseworker. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, case readings of foster care cases conducted as part of the State's self-assessment revealed that the required safety assessment was completed correctly in 76 percent of the cases reviewed.

## **II. PERMANENCY**

*Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.*

### **Status of Permanency Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- 75 percent of the cases were rated as having substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity; and
- The State's percentage of children reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care (52.9%) does not meet the national standard of 76.2 percent.
- The State's percentage of children having had no more than 2 placements in a 12-month period (86.2%) does not meet the national standard of 86.7 percent.

Although the State did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1, there were many children in the foster care cases reviewed that experienced permanency and stability in their living situations. This may be attributed to a variety of factors. For one, the State places a major emphasis on placement with relatives, which tends to result in fewer placement changes. Also, FIA is diligent in filing for TPR when appropriate and in encouraging adoptions among relatives and foster parents. In addition, the State attempts to expedite the adoption process through use of the new Birth Match system to check for prior FIA histories in which a parent's rights to other children have been terminated. In cases in which a parent has previously had parental rights terminated for another child, FIA when appropriate will expedite the adoption process by filing for TPR immediately rather than waiting for 15 months. Finally, the State Data Profile indicates that the percentage of finalized adoptions occurring within 24 months of entry into foster care meets the national standard of 32.0 percent. Despite these strengths, the case review process found that there were several cases in which FIA had not made diligent efforts to achieve permanency goals in a timely manner, particularly cases in which the goal was reunification or permanent placement with relatives (item 8).

#### **Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the following:

- In 86 percent of applicable cases, no re-entries into foster care occurred.
- The data reported in the State Data Profile indicate that the rate of re-entry into foster care within 12 months is 5.0 percent, which meets the national standard of 8.6 percent.

#### **Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that according to the State Data Profile, the percentage of children in Fiscal Year 2000 having 2 or more placements within a 12 month period did not meet the national standard. Although in 89 percent of the applicable cases reviewers determined that FIA had made diligent efforts to ensure children's placement stability, because the two indicators are assessed through different measures, it is necessary to meet the standard or criteria for both in order to receive a rating of strength. Focus groups with FIA staff, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) members (conducted as part of the State's self-assessment process) identified the following as affecting movement of children in foster care:

- Initial placements do not match children's needs.
- Inadequate information is provided to foster parents regarding the child's behavior when the child is initially placed.
- Inadequate support of foster parents to prevent movement when children entering foster care have many problems.
- Specialized foster homes are lacking in Michigan.

#### **Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 89 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that FIA had established an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner. Among the 28 foster care cases reviewed, 13 children had a goal of reunification with parents or permanent placement with relatives; 14 children had a goal of adoption; and 1 child had a goal of long-term foster care leading to emancipation to independent living.

#### **Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing improvement for the following reasons:

- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year 2000, the State did not meet the national standard for reunifications within 12 months of entry into foster care; and
- Although 69 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for this item, in 31 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that FIA had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal of reunification or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

According to the Statewide Assessment, a survey of workers identified the three primary barriers to reunification as poor parenting skills (68%), emotional instability (60%), and substance abuse (42%). However, a survey of parents whose children were in foster care revealed that 26 percent reported that they had service needs that were not met by the agency, particularly needs for housing and family counseling.

#### **Item 9. Adoption**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the following findings:

- In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was making or had made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner.
- According to the State Data Profile, the percentage of children in the State achieving a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care (32.0%) meets the national standard of 32.0 percent.

According to the Statewide Assessment, 90 percent of finalized adoptions in 2001 were with relatives or foster parents.

#### **Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in the one applicable case, reviewers determined that FIA had made diligent efforts to support the child's long-term placement and eventual transition to independent living. The child, who also is a parent, received services to help her complete her GED and obtain employment.

***Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.***

**Status of Permanency Outcome 2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 75.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Although the State did not reach the required 90 percent achievement required for substantial conformity, there were areas of strength. For example, family and community connections were preserved for most children in the foster care cases reviewed, and almost all children were placed in close proximity to their communities of origin when relevant. In contrast, FIA was found to be inconsistent in its efforts to place children with siblings or to search for relatives as potential placement resources, particularly paternal relatives. In addition, concerns were identified regarding FIA's efforts to promote visitation and bonding with parents.

**Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 94 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that FIA had made diligent efforts to ensure that children's foster care placements were in close proximity to their parents or relatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Family to Family projects implemented in two counties are designed to ensure that children placed in foster care remain in the communities in which they lived prior to their foster care placement.

**Item 12. Placement with siblings**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although this item was rated as a Strength in 84 percent of the cases, in 16 percent of the cases, siblings were not placed together and reviewers determined that their separation was not deemed necessary to meet the needs of one or more of the children. The Statewide Assessment notes that according to the 1999 Supervising Agency Report Card, for sibling groups of 2, 33.1 percent were in separate placements; for sibling groups of 3-4, 54.6 percent were in separate placements; and for sibling groups of 5 or more, 82.8 percent were in separate placements. The Statewide Assessment also notes that placing large sibling groups together is problematic because most foster homes are licensed for no more than four children.

**Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although this item was rated as a Strength in 68 percent of the applicable cases, in 32 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that FIA had not made concerted efforts to facilitate visitation. This finding is in conflict with State policy and the Juvenile Code. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the Juvenile



Code requires that parent-child parenting time occur no less than every 7 days after the dispositional hearing, unless clearly documented as harmful to the child. Scheduling is to be done with primary consideration for the parents' time commitment and supervising agencies must have flexibility to provide a number of hours outside the traditional workday. Legislation requires foster care workers to be present during parenting time so workers will be able to monitor and assess in-home parenting time between parent and child and testify in court as to the interaction between parents and children. The Statewide Assessment cites that if siblings are not placed together, sibling visitation is required.

#### **Item 14. Preserving connections**

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 89 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to preserve children's connections to community, faith, and friends.

#### **Item 15. Relative placement**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that in 18 percent of the cases, the agency had not made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. A key concern identified was that when one or two relatives were identified and found to be unsuitable, the agency did not continue to search for other relatives. According to the Statewide Assessment, in a survey of parents whose children were in foster care, 64 percent reported that their caseworker had asked them about possible relatives to care for their child.

#### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 81 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that, in 19 percent of applicable cases, the agency did not adequately support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care.

### **III. WELL-BEING**

*Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.*

#### **Status of Well-Being Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved for 71.4 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

A general finding of the CFSR process was that FIA is not consistent in meeting the service needs of children and families. In addition, there were many cases in which family members, particularly fathers, were not involved in the case planning process, and many cases in which caseworker visits with children and parents was not of sufficient frequency or quality to ensure children's safety and/or promote attainment of case goals.

**Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 73 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that in 27 percent of the cases, FIA had not been effective in addressing the service needs of children, parents, and/or foster parents. This finding is consistent with information provided in the Statewide Assessment. According to the Statewide Assessment, targeted case readings revealed that 77 percent of the foster care cases read contained an up-to-date Child Needs and Strength Assessment and only 62 percent of the needs identified as "priority needs" were addressed in the treatment plan and service agreement. In addition, focus groups with staff, FCRB members, and CASA members for the Statewide Assessment revealed that supportive services to foster parents may not be provided on a consistent basis.

**Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 70 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that in 30 percent of the cases, FIA had not made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. These findings are consistent with information provided in the Statewide Assessment. According to the Statewide Assessment, although agency policy requires that the family be extensively involved in case planning, foster care case readings conducted as part of the self-assessment process revealed that parents were involved in plan development in 59 percent of the cases. In addition, interviews with parents involved with the CPS program found that 61 percent reported that they had input regarding the services they received. In cases where youth were assessed for independent living needs as part of the Child Needs Assessments (CANS), targeted case readings revealed that 85 percent of the youth were involved in plan development.

**Item 19. Worker visits with child**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that in 20 percent of the applicable cases, caseworker visits with children were not of sufficient frequency and/or quality and often did not meet agency policy requirements. Targeted foster care case readings completed during the Statewide Assessment revealed that caseworkers were visiting with children at least monthly in 62 percent of the cases reviewed. Staffing issues were cited as affecting FIA's ability to meet the State policy requirements.

**Item 20. Worker visits with parents**

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 72.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that in 27.5 percent of applicable cases, the frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to promote the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. A primary concern identified was lack of caseworker contacts with fathers, even in cases in which fathers had been caretakers and/or maintained connections with the children. The Statewide Assessment notes that targeted foster care readings conducted during the Statewide Assessment process found that caseworkers were visiting with parents at least monthly in 70 percent of cases.

***Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.***

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2 – Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 based on the finding that 78.8 percent of the cases reviewed were found to have substantially achieved this outcome. This is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

**Item 21. Educational needs of the child.**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although the item was rated as a Strength in 79 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that in 21 percent of the applicable cases, the educational needs of children were not effectively and appropriately addressed. According to the Statewide Assessment, focus groups with FCRB members and CASA (convened as part of the State's self-assessment process) identified a lack of tutoring services and special education services for children in foster care. In a mail survey of FIA foster parents, a key finding was that 55 percent of the parents responding either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the "child's caseworker was helpful in linking the child to these (educational) services."

***Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.***

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 3 - Not in Substantial Conformity**

Michigan did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 86.0 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

In general, the CFSR process found that FIA was effective in meeting children's physical health needs, but was less consistent in its efforts to address children's mental health needs. A key concern identified was that mental health services were not always available or of sufficient quality to meet the children's needs. In addition, in some cases children did not receive adequate monitoring to ensure

that recommended mental health services were actually received.

**Item 22. Physical health of the child**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that, in 89 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that FIA adequately addressed the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. Overall, medical and dental services were accessible, services were provided, and documentation was thorough. The Statewide Assessment notes that during the targeted case readings conducted as part of the self-assessment process, 75 percent of the children in foster care had a dental exam within 90 days, and 40 percent had a medical exam within 30 days. The key problem regarding medical exams was that it was difficult to schedule a medical exam within 30 days.

**Item 23. Mental health of the child**

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although this item was rated as a Strength in 81 percent of the cases, in 19 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the State did not adequately address children's mental health needs. A key problem identified in the Statewide Assessment is the lack of adequate funding in the State for mental health services.

**KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

**IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**Status of Statewide Information System**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the factor of Statewide Information System.

**Item 24. State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.**

This item has been rated as a Strength because Michigan's Statewide Information system can, at minimum, readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

**V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

### **Status of Case Review System**

Michigan is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

#### **Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.**

Item 25 has been assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement because case plans are not being consistently developed jointly with parents even though FIA has a policy requiring joint case plan development. In 30 percent of the 47 applicable cases, case reviewers found that parents and children (when appropriate) were not involved in the development of the case plan.

#### **Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.**

This item was rated as a Strength because periodic reviews are generally held within the 6-month timeframe required by Federal statute. According to the Statewide Assessment, legislation passed in 1998 requires that review hearings must be held every 91 days for all children in foster care, except for children placed permanently with a relative or in a permanent foster family agreement. For children placed permanently with a relative or in a permanent foster family home, the legislation requires that the court must hold a review hearing every 182 days after the first year of placement. Reviews can be held by either a referee or a judge.

#### **Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.**

This item was assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement because the consistency with which reviews are completed is variable. In some instances, although the reviews are held in a timely manner, the focus is not always on advancing permanency. According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency planning hearings (PPH) are required by Michigan statute for all children who are wards of the State due to abuse and/or neglect. The PPH must be held 1 year after the petition requesting removal is filed with the court and annually thereafter. Hearing schedules are determined by the court. (Michigan statute does not require a PPH for juvenile justice youth, although some courts are convening PPH for these youth.)

#### **Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.**

This item was rated as a Strength because Michigan has a process and policy in place for the termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings that exceeds the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. Furthermore, information from stakeholder interviews and the Statewide Assessment suggest that the TPR process is usually implemented in accordance with the policy.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan statute requires a permanency planning hearing (PPH) within 1 year after the petition requesting removal is filed with the court and annually thereafter. At the PPH, if the court finds that the child should not be returned to his/her home, the court must order the agency to file a termination petition with the court unless the court finds that initiating the TPR is clearly not in the child's best interest. Policy supports documenting a compelling reason or filing the petition to coincide with the 12-month timeframe and the PPH, rather than waiting for the 15th month. Michigan statute requires the termination petition to be filed within 42 days of the PPH; although there are no sanctions for not filing within the timeframe.

**Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.**

This item was assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement because the findings of the review indicate an inconsistent notification of foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers due in part to a lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities and process for notifying these parties.

## **VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

### **Status of Quality Assurance System**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the factor of Quality Assurance System.

**Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.**

This item is rated as a Strength because Michigan has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children. According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan's Child Care Organization Licensing Act (Public Act 116) provides for the protection of children placed out of their homes through the establishment of standards of care for child placement agencies, institutions, and family foster homes. The Act also contains provision of penalties for noncompliance with promulgated administrative rules. New licensing rules for foster and group homes and child placing agencies were effective January 1, 2001.

**Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.**

This item was rated a Strength because Michigan has a multi-level quality assurance system comprised of both internal and external components which evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs, provides relevant reports and evaluates program

improvement measures that are implemented. According to the Statewide Assessment, Core Children's Services Universal Outcomes in the areas of prevention, protection, preservation, permanency and proficiency were established in 1998 as part of performance monitoring. Michigan also has instituted a performance appraisal process, the Performance Management and Development Program (PMDP), for division-level staff that is tied to the critical success factors of its strategic plan. Michigan's quality assurance system for safety, permanency and well-being for children and families served by the Agency includes a CPS peer review process.

## **VII. TRAINING**

### **Status of Training**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training.

**Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.**

Item 32 was rated as a Strength because Michigan has a statutorily mandated initial orientation program for new staff which is competency based and outcome focused. According to the Statewide Assessment, the Michigan Child Welfare Training Plan is predicated on a competency-based and outcome-focused comprehensive training initiative. Components include: an 8-week pre-service child welfare curriculum, the Child Welfare Institute (CWI), for public and private agency staff; advanced child welfare modules; bachelor and master's level university course work; and collaborative training with the courts, State police, Tribes, and Prosecuting Attorney Association of Michigan.

**Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.**

Item 33 was rated as a Strength because Michigan has in place an ongoing training program for staff commensurate with their duties. According to the Statewide Assessment, each worker and supervisor must receive at least 14 hours of training annually. Individual staff development plans, begun during CWI, are a requirement of FIA's Performance Architect Performance Management System, which is maintained by the Office of Human Resources and supported with learning resources. All training data are tracked by the Office of Professional Development. Every time someone registers for a training session, a record is generated that indicates whether the person successfully completed the training, canceled attendance, failed to show, or failed the program.

**Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.**

Item 34 was rated as a Strength because Michigan provides training for current or prospective foster and adoptive parents that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan requires that foster parents receive no less than 12 hours of training, which can include up to 6 hours of orientation, within the first 6 months of initial licensing and before placement of a child. During the next 2 years, an additional 12 hours of training is required and then 6 hours annually after that. New direct care workers at child caring institutions must participate in a minimum of 50 hours of planned training within the first year of employment and then at least 25 hours annually thereafter.

## **VIII. SERVICE ARRAY**

### **Status of Service Array**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of service array.

**Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.**

Item 35 was rated as a Strength because the State has in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families. According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan has a State-level interactive initiative, Putting It Together With Michigan Families (PIT Crew) that enables State partners to plan joint initiatives and training opportunities and share best practices that address the needs of its constituents. At the local level, each county has one Multipurpose Collaborative Body (MPCB) that coordinates services within the community. The goal is to ensure that families receive services that are strength-based, community driven, family-oriented, and have demonstrated effectiveness.

**Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.**

Item 36 was rated as a Strength because services are available in the vast majority of communities within the State, although there is a paucity of services available in the outlying areas and service delivery may be time limited. According to the Statewide Assessment, all of Michigan's counties have the capabilities to design services to meet their community needs via the MPCB and FCC structures in



place. The County Child Care Fund (CCF) is a State cost-sharing program for reimbursement to local counties for the cost of providing eligible services. Family reunification is available in those counties with the highest-out-of home care populations.

**Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.** Item 37 was rated as a Area Needing Improvement because services are not consistently being individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, wraparound services are being provided for children and families at risk of out-of-home placement with 2,000 families receiving the service in FY2000. According to the Statewide Assessment, CASA and FCRB members noted that service plans for children and families tend to be generic and not address the individualized needs of the families.

## **IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

### **Status of Agency Responsiveness To The Community**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

**Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.**

Item 38 was rated as a Strength because the State engages in ongoing consultation with key external partners and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. According to the Statewide Assessment, Michigan has two main avenues for consulting and coordinating on the development of its CFSP: Citizen Review Panels (CRP) and the Native American Task Force. CRPs were created to provide an opportunity for citizens to aid in ensuring that the State meets the goal of protecting children from abuse and neglect.

**Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered.**

Item 39 was rated as a Strength because Michigan develops its annual reports of progress and services in consultation with representatives identified in Item 38.

**Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.**

Item 40 was rated as a Strength because Michigan's services are coordinated with other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population and collaboratives exist both at the State and local level.

## **X. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION**

### **Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**

Michigan is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

#### **Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.**

Item 41 was rated as a Strength because the State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

#### **Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.**

Item 42 was rated as a Strength because standards are in place that are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions. According to the Statewide Assessment, prior to the implementation of the ASFA Final Rule, Michigan relaxed the foster home licensing standards for relatives. Specifically, relatives did not need to attend training. The policy was changed in November 2000 to require relative homes to meet the same licensing requirements as non-relative foster homes. The number of licensed relative homes is believed to be small as many relatives either do not meet licensing requirements or do not wish to go through the licensing process.

#### **Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.**

Item 43 was rated as a Strength because the State has in place a process which complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements.

#### **Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.**

Item 44 was rated as a Strength because Michigan has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. According to the Statewide Assessment, Child Placing Agency Licensing Rules require that each supervising agency develops and maintains an ongoing recruitment program. The Foster Care Support Unit provides an array of programs and services to all public and

private agencies, many of the States' foster parent training coalitions, and the MFAPA. The overall goal is to increase the number of qualified foster parents. Within that general goal, there are targeted recruitment efforts for foster/adoptive families that focus on the ethnic and racial diversity of the State population. There are regional recruitment coalitions that include FIA and private agencies.

**Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.**

This item was rated as a Strength because Michigan has in place a process for the effective use of cross jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely permanent placements for waiting children. According to the Statewide Assessment, as a State-administered child welfare system, movement of children into nearby counties is frequent and not problematic. Recruitment efforts are accomplished through the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) photo-listing book. It is updated monthly and sent to all FIA offices and private agencies with FIA adoption contracts, as well as many local public libraries. The MARE website is used to reach potential out-of-State adoptive parents. In FY2001, 39 children were placed out of State.

## Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Michigan. The on-site review was conducted during the week of September 9, 2002. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Child and Family Services Administration of the Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA);
- The State Data Profile prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services providing State data for the year 2000;
- Reviews of 49 cases at three sites throughout the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites) with State and local stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, legislators, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 49 cases reviewed are the following:

- 24 cases were reviewed in Wayne County (Detroit), 14 in Saginaw County, and 11 in Jackson County.
- All 49 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 28 of the cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 21 were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained in their homes).
- In 33 cases, all children in the family were African American; in 10 cases, all children in the family were Caucasian; in 1 case, all children in the family were American Indian; in 1 case, the children in the family were Hispanic; in 1 case the children were of two or more races; and in 1 case, all children in the family were Arab American. There were two cases in which the race/ethnicity of the children was not identified.
- Of the 49 cases reviewed, the **primary** reasons for opening the child welfare agency cases were the following:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) - 22 cases (45%)
  - Physical abuse - 11 cases (22%)
  - Substance abuse by parent - 6 cases (12%)
  - Medical neglect - 3 cases (6%)
  - Abandonment - 1 case (2%)
  - Domestic violence in child's home - 1 case (2%)
  - Emotional maltreatment - 1 case (2%)

- Substance abuse by child -1 case (2%)
  - Sexual abuse - 1 case (2%)
  - Other - 2 cases (4%)
- Of the 49 cases reviewed, **all** reasons cited for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
    - Neglect (not including medical neglect) –36 cases (73%)
    - Physical abuse – 19 cases (39%)
    - Substance abuse by parents – 18 cases (37%)
    - Domestic violence in child’s home – 7 cases (14%)
    - Medical neglect – 7 cases (14%)
    - Mental/physical health of parent – 5 cases (10%)
    - Abandonment – 4 cases (8%)
    - Sexual abuse – 4 cases (8%)
    - Mental/physical health of child – 2 cases (4%)
    - Child in juvenile justice system – 1 case (2%)
    - Child’s behavior – 1 case (2%)
    - Substance abuse by child – 1 case (2%)
    - Emotional maltreatment – 1 case (2%)
    - Other– 3 cases (6%)
  - In 20 (71%) of the 28 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in foster care during the entire period under review.

The first section of the report presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State’s performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State’s status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency’s ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.